

(b) an email-receiving server connected between the network and the email client for receiving email addressed to the unique email address of the user, said email-receiving server having an authorized senders list (ASL) module which maintains an ASL list of email addresses of senders authorized to send email to the user, and

(c) an email rejection module operable with the ASL module for rejecting the receipt of email addressed to the email address of the user if the email address of the sender is not one that is maintained on the ASL list [for the user] by returning an error message to the sender.

--13. (Amended) A method for eliminating unauthorized email sent to a user on a network comprising the steps of:

(a) receiving email addressed to the unique email address of the user,

(b) maintaining an authorized senders list (ASL list) of email addresses of external users authorized to send email to the user, and

(c) rejecting the receipt of email sent to the email address of the user if the email address of the sender is not one maintained on the ASL list [for the user] by returning an error message to the sender.

--18. (Amended) An email server system for eliminating unauthorized email sent via a network to the server addressed to a unique email address for a user of the system comprising:

(a) an authorized senders list (ASL) module which maintains an ASL list of email addresses of senders authorized to

send email to the user, and

(b) an email rejection module operable with the ASL module for rejecting the receipt of email addressed to the email address of the user if the email address of the sender is not one that is maintained on the ASL list [for the user] by returning an error message to the sender.

In Claim 19, line 1, change the claim dependency to --  
Claim 18--.

REMARKS

Main Claims 1, 13, and 18 are amended to be consistent in scope with the claims in the corresponding PCT International Application US00/23561 which were amended in response to the IPE Written Opinion. The limitation has been added to the main claims that the email rejection model rejects the receipt of email from an unauthorized sender by returning an error message to the sender. This limitation differentiates the invention as claimed from the Hashimoto U.S. Patent 5,931,905 cited in the IPE Written Opinion and other conventional email filtering systems, which only receive email and then act to filter out those from prohibited or known or suspected spammer sources. The conventional email filtering systems typically shunt the filtered mail to a "dead" or "look at later" box, but do not return an error message to the sender, such as a message that the user addressed does not exist. Returning an error message can deter the spammer from continuing to send spam mail, whereas merely filtering the mail from the subscriber's inbox is unknown to and does not deter the spammer.